

## **Therapeutic Counselling**

- 1) Interactions can be a different and more intense experience
- 2) It's okay not to always have an answer
- 3) Do not offer a solution to each problem, impose personal values, or do all of talking.
- 4) Let the person use their own words
- 5) Employ active listening, e.g. being fully present, lower the side rails, sit down, be open to what the patient is conveying
- 6) Give permission to express anger, hate, or frustration
- 7) Acknowledge (don't deny) feelings and fears about death, family concerns, God, relationships
- 8) Verbalize that it's okay to cry; this is a healthy release of feelings
- 9) Provide honest answers to questions even if it's "I don't know."
- 10) Understand that some patients may never share what they are thinking or feeling
- 11) Recognize patient rites, customs, and funeral needs.
- 12) Address next of kin dilemmas
- 13) Address the patient's sense of loss of control and anger that may be expressed.
- 14) Allow the patient control over daily schedule and environment, encourage independent goals and activities, and definition of priorities.

Open and interactive communication is necessary to prepare the patient and more often the family for how death will occur. As the time draws near, explanations and openness about physical changes, moods, behavior changes, and anticipated signs of when the end is near, can alleviate some anxiety and in some cases finishing business.

Program Guide 1140.10. Hospice Program  
Department of Veterans Affairs 9/13/96